



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Mecklenburg County Regional Sports Complex in Matthews, 1505 Tanktown Rd., Matthews, NC at 6 p.m. on June 12, 2018

## **PRC MINUTES June 12, 2018**

### **ATTENDANCE**

**PRC Present:** Rick Winiker, Vice Chair  
Peter Engels, Executive Secretary  
Sterling Martin  
Brian Cox  
Blanche Penn  
Doug Burnett  
Tristan McMannis  
Mary Foxx Johnson

**PRC Absent** Vacancy – North 1  
Vacancy – Northern Towns  
Vacancy – South 3  
Heidi Pruess  
John Leonard

### **Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Vice Chair, Rick Winiker, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

Vice Chair Winiker welcomed all to the June 12, 2018 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Preston Buckman, Facility Manager of the Sports Complex, also welcomed everyone and shared updates on the facility.

- High-rise bleacher expansion is complete and has passed inspection

### **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

## **Public Appearance - None**

## **Awards and Recognition: - None**

## **PRC Chair Report**

Vice-Chair Rick Winiker brought attention to:

**PRC Applications and Reappointments** will be going before the BOCC on June 19.

Commissioners Heidi Pruess, Peter Engels, Rick Winiker and Sterling Martin are up for reappointments and there are two applicants for the Northern Towns position and three applicants for the South 3 position. This information, as prepared by the Park and Recreation Administrative Support Supervisor and contained in the agenda packets as item 12b-5, can be viewed here: [P&R Application and Reappointment Packet](#)

**June 4 Budget Public Hearing:** The presentation by the PRC at the June 4, 2018 Budget Public Hearing addressed the following asks by the PRC to the BOCC:

- Escalate efforts to fulfill remaining Master Plan projects
- Increase funding for staff and programming
- Escalate land acquisition for parkland
- Increase collaboration and partnerships to address equity and access to parks

The presentation information and supporting documentation in its entirety is contained in the agenda packet as item 12b-3 and can be viewed here: [PRC Budget Public Hearing Documents](#)

**July 10 PRC Meeting Re: Advisory Councils:** All PRC were reminded of a special meeting to discuss Advisory Councils. This meeting is not mandatory, but all were encouraged to attend. The meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on July 10 at the Mahlon Adams Pavilion located in Freedom Park.

**August PRC Meeting Topic – New Master Plan:** Discussion regarding funding for a new/updated Park and Recreation Master Plan will be on the August 14 PRC agenda. All were asked to seek input from their Advisory Council members. Current 10-Year Master Plan is located at the following link:

<https://www.mecknc.gov/ParkandRec/Parks/ParkPlanning/Pages/default.aspx>

## **PRC Priorities:**

## **Land Acquisition/Preservation – Park Land Acquisition Process and Feedback**

**Jacqueline McNeil, Real Estate Manager – Asset and Facility Management and Liz Morrell, Park and Recreation Strategic Planning and Evaluation** made a presentation on the Parkland

## **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

Acquisition Process which covered:

- Parkland Portfolio
- Greenprint Model
- Gap Areas
- Land Acquisition Process

The presentation prompted considerable conversation resulting in the following notes:

### **Land Acquisition**

- Jacqueline McNeil, Real Estate Manager with Asset and Facility Management (AFM) and staff, are responsible for land acquisition across the County with 80 to 90 percent of the land acquisition focused on Park and Recreation.
- Following the recession, the decision was made to allocate \$6.6 million per year for land acquisition. Of that \$6.6 million, \$1 million is set aside for greenway acquisition. To date, the majority of the \$6.6 million has been for Park and Recreation purchases, however, it is possible that other County purchases could come from this allotment. Unspent funds roll over to the next fiscal year.
- The CIP covers the cost of design and construction. The land acquisition cost would be covered by the \$6.6 million.
- The current park land portfolio is 21,400 acres.
- Park and Recreation is currently +/-200 acres for FY18 land acquisition.
- In FY16 the County entered into a partnership with NCDOT to lease 144 acres along Long Creek for Park and Recreation. This has been a successful partnership and the County hopes to develop more partnerships like this in the future.
- Using the greenprint process, the Department identifies gap areas and prioritizes a list of parcels that would fit the needs of our divisions; greenways, nature preserves, neighborhood parks, community parks or a recreation center.
- Greenprinting is not the only way the County identifies potential land acquisitions. Some parcels might not be in the P&R portfolio but are in the County. Some of the other tools used by P&R to acquire land include opportunities, partnerships and professional judgement. Greenprinting may identify a parcel available in a gap area but does not identify adjacent properties that are available which could result in a larger acquisition.
- Cross Charlotte Trail is an example of a coming together of different partners who are working on a recreational opportunity. Uptown has a dividing line and the County is responsible for land purchases south of the line and down to SC. The City is responsible for everything north of the dividing line. An agreement between the City and County spells out specifically the responsibilities of each as it pertains to the Cross-Charlotte Trail.
- The Department does not have a formal process in place to know when properties in gap areas become available.
- AFM uses a strategy of working closely with P&R staff to identify priority properties to pursue and then consulting various data banks along with investigating ownership to let

### **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

them know the County is interested in the property. Other opportunities come forward to the Department from brokers, field staff, right of way agents, partners and agencies.

- The County purchases property based on a 3<sup>rd</sup> party market appraisal. However, the BOCC has the authority to pay more, for good reason, than appraised value, such as the property that is now Romare Bearden Park.
- Parcels that the County is interested in pursuing is not made public to protect the land owner who may be willing to sell, to avoid problems with landowners who may not be interested in selling, and to protect our relationship with landowners during the process of purchasing property.
- Feedback from the PRC was encouraged on the strategy regarding location, demographics and prioritizing of land acquisition.
- It was suggested that the Master Plan be revisited; an opportunity to engage the community and change the philosophy towards acquiring park land. The \$6.6 million, 1% of the capital funding, was a philosophy that was adopted during the recession to continue purchasing land. Revisiting the Master Plan would provide an opportunity to question if this is an adequate strategy for the community in the coming years.
- **Land Acquisition Process:**
  - Determine the need based on the Master Plan goal or if it is needed for an existing funded capital project
  - Determine resources
  - Contact landowner
  - Explain the need and start the acquisition process
  - Perform due diligence: appraisal, survey, environmental
  - Make an offer to purchase
  - Obtain signed offer from owner
  - Complete mandatory referral process: Joint Use Task Force, Planning Committee
  - Obtain BOCC approval
  - Complete title work
  - Closing
  - Turn property over to P&R Operations

#### **Greenprint Model and Gap Areas**

- Liz Morrell, Strategic Planning and Evaluation for Park and Recreation reviewed the greenprint model and gap areas.
- The greenprint model, developed by Trust for Public Land (TPL), is historically the Department's strategy behind our land acquisition process with the goal of helping Park and Recreation visualize the County's parks, open space, natural resources, recreational centers and special facility needs based on capacity and demand.
- Our GIS Department runs the greenprint model for the Department and will also be working on an overlay to show what parcels are available, documenting tree canopy and topography in Mecklenburg County. The Department will also be hiring a temporary employee with GIS skills who will be working on our mapping needs for security, land acquisition and deferred maintenance.

#### **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

- Gap areas are also identified by the greenprint model using physical and demographic data such as existing park resources, information on property and land use in a subject area, current and planned infrastructure/development, sensitive and or protected land, land attributes, demographic data, population, and much more.
- The greenprint model is up for discussion to continue with this model or for refining/improving it. With the help of GIS, the Department will continue to work on the strategy behind land acquisition, mapping of gap areas and identifying available land, and incorporating demographics into the model.
- Interest was expressed in how to identify all types of land that may be available in the greenprinting process. Liz said it could be done and staff and GIS would need to work to identify land for sale, potentially for sale, a potential partnership, unavailable property, CMS property, County owned land, etc.
- Consider partnering with the UNCC Center for Applied GIS Science for projected population growth.
- **TPL Park Survey:**
  - TPL is the organization that funded the recent park study that ranked Charlotte 97<sup>th</sup>. Plans are underway to meet with TPL to discuss the study and the greenprint model and to look at including all of Mecklenburg County in future park studies/surveys.
  - The TPL study was in the City of Charlotte and not all of Mecklenburg County.
  - GIS will be updating an accessibility analysis.
  - Other analysis to consider for future studies would be private recreation and leisure land.

### **Adequate Funding**

**Senior Fees:** The senior trip fee of \$5.00 was discussed under the Director's Report

**Master Plan Update:** Discussion regarding funding for updating the Master Plan will be a topic of Discussion on the August 14, 2018 PRC Agenda

### **Active Community Engagement**

#### **Director's Report**

In the absence of Director Lee Jones, Peter Cook, Division Director of Park Operations, reported on the following:

**Naming Application – Barry Gullet Trail:** A naming application to name a section of Clark's Creek Greenway to *Barry Gullet Trail on Clark's Creek Greenway* has been endorsed by the Greenway Advisory Council and the North Park Region Advisory Council and was brought before the Park and Recreation Commission for endorsement. Barry Gullet retired from the City of Charlotte after a 39-year career at Charlotte Water. The application can be viewed here: [Barry Gullet Trail](#)

### **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Winiker to endorse naming a section of Clark's Creek Greenway to "Barry Gullet Trail on Clark's Creek Greenway", which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett and approved unanimously.

**Senior Fees Update:** Lee Jones, Director, Lorraine Bias, Sr. Fiscal Administrator and Peter Cook, Division Director of Park Operations have met with Finance and the County Manager's office and are working on a policy and procedure for possible funding of Senior Trips. The funding will have to be identified and eligibility requirements established. This should be in place by July 1 and will be brought back to the PRC in August.

Commissioner Penn expressed her deep concern and frustration with both the Department and the PRC's willingness to act quickly on other Park and Recreation items, but not as quickly to find a solution to the \$5 Senior Trip Fee. This concern has been repeatedly brought before the PRC by senior citizens. Commission Penn continues to advocate for waiving this fee for seniors.

Peter Cook said he appreciated Commissioner Penn's patience and that bringing this concern before the PRC and staff has resulted in the Department's commitment to identifying funding to address the seniors concern.

The PRC expressed their support for this concern and are committed to looking for ways to be better advocates, as a board, for this concern as well as many other concerns.

The \$5 senior trip fee has been addressed in the past by the Sr. Citizen Advisory Council and after hearing the justification for the fee agreed that it was justified. Since the concern over the \$5 fee has been brought up at the PRC meetings on multiple occasions, the Sr. Citizen Advisory Council will be revisiting this issue.

**Freedom Park Play60 Rework:** The Carolina Panthers are donating \$200,000 to renovate the first generation of Play60 originally installed 5 years ago at Freedom Park. Play60 is a multi-generational play opportunity and since the first installation at Freedom Park there have been Play60 installations at Reedy Creek and Hornet's Nest. The upgrade will continue to have the Lowes imprint. The request to accept this donation will go to the BOCC in July.

Vice Chair Winker said there have been citizen complaints about signage in our parks and this might be a topic for discussion at a later date.

**Cordelia Indoor Pavilion:** The ribbon cutting for the new Cordelia Park Indoor Pavilion was on June 6 with a great turnout. Remarks were made by Ella Scarborough, BOCC Chair, George Dunlap, BOCC District 3 and Blanche Penn, PRC.

**Ramsey Creek Fishing Pier:** There will be a rededication of the Patriot Pier on Saturday, June 16 at 9 a.m. Among the dignitaries present will be Senator Tillis and Senator Tart. The Patriot

**PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*

Military Family Foundation donated \$26,595 to improvements of the Ramsey Creek Pier and was part of the overall renovations at Ramsey Creek Park.

**LSC GW & Stream Enhancement:** The opening ceremony for this section of LSC GW, Tyvola Road to Huntingtowne Farms Park, will be held on Saturday, June 23, 2018 at 10 a.m. Remarks will be made by Ella Scarborough, BOCC Chair; Matthew Ridenhour, BOCC District 5; Rick Winiker, PRC; Tom Okel, Carolina Thread Trail; Michael Restaino, BCBSNC; and Lee Jones, Director of Park and Recreation.

**PRC Applications:** Current PRC applications and reappointments were included in the June PRC agenda packet and will be on the June 19 BOCC agenda. The packet provided by the Clerk's office to the BOCC can be viewed here: [Park and Recreation Appointments/Reappointments](#)

**NOTE:** At the June 19 BOCC meeting the following appointments and reappointments were made:

- Commissioner Peter Engels was reappointed to a first full term expiring 6/2021
- Commissioner Rick Winiker was reappointed to a first full term expiring 6/2021
- Commissioner Sterling Martin was reappointed to a second full term expiring 6/2021
- Commissioner Heidi Pruess was reappointed to a 2<sup>nd</sup> full term expiring 6/2021
- Paul Freestone was appointed to the PRC as the Northern Towns Representative, expiring 6/2019
- Rufus Kearney was appointed to the PRC as the South Region 3 Representative, expiring 6/2020

### **Advisory Council Appointments**

Advisory Council reappointments will be deferred until the August 14, 2018 PRC meeting.

### **Consent**

**Motion was made** by Commissioner Burnett to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of [May 8, 2018](#), which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

### **PRC Reports and Requests**

Commissioner Engels reminded the PRC that the July 10 meeting to be held at Mahlon Adams at 6 p.m. is not a mandatory meeting but all were encouraged to attend. A look at ways to improve our advisory councils will be the main topic.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

## **PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

5841 Brookshire Boulevard • Charlotte, North Carolina 28216-2403 • (980) 314-1000 • Fax (704) 394-8861

[www.parkandrec.com](http://www.parkandrec.com)

*All services are available without regard to origin, sex, or disability*